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Normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Summary

The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/289, provides a summary of the normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the Entity's contribution to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in intergovernmental processes. It also provides information on how the Entity has contributed to the implementation of the policy guidance provided by the Commission on the Status of Women. The report covers the calendar year 2017.

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I. Introduction

1. In 2017, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) continued to support Member States in accelerating progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls through research, policy analysis, recommendations in reports of the Secretary-General and the provision of substantive and technical support and expertise to Member States for the systematic integration of a gender perspective into intergovernmental norms and standards. The Entity's role in supporting Member States to strengthen global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women is a foundation for the work of the entire organization. That role permeates the Entity's new strategic plan, 2018–2021 (UNW/2017/6/Rev.1), which was endorsed in August 2017 by the Executive Board of UN-Women and underlines the Entity's contribution to linking global and national policies for gender equality.

2. UN-Women focused much of its intergovernmental support on addressing key gaps and challenges in the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, UN-Women supported Member States in the adoption of agreed conclusions that address the structural barriers that hinder women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work (see E/2017/27, chap. I). The Entity also placed a high priority on contributing to the global review process of the 2030 Agenda, including in the context of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up and the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

3. At the same time, UN-Women amplified efforts aimed at addressing gaps and challenges in the implementation of existing normative frameworks through its support to governments at the country and regional levels. The Entity's operational work was guided by intergovernmental normative frameworks, including the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixtieth session on women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development (see E/2016/27, chap. I). The Entity played a key role in supporting countries in formulating or updating national gender equality action plans, strengthening national statistical capacities and in promoting gender mainstreaming and policy coherence in the work of government ministries towards a gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

II. Strengthening normative work on gender equality

4. The section below provides an overview of the support provided by UN-Women to strengthen gender equality norms and standards in the Commission on the Status of Women, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, including its subsidiary bodies.

A. Commission on the Status of Women

5. UN-Women, as the substantive secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women, supported all aspects of the work of the Commission in its role as the principal policymaking body charged with setting global standards and formulating policies to promote gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and their human rights worldwide. This included logistical and substantive support in preparation, and during the in-session servicing, of the Commission's official

meetings and technical support to the negotiations on the agreed conclusions on the priority theme. In preparation for the sixty-first session of the Commission, UN-Women convened an expert group meeting on the priority theme of "Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work", which examined the challenges and opportunities for fostering greater economic empowerment and independence for women in the changing world of work.

6. The report of the Secretary-General on the priority theme (E/CN.6/2017/3) was prepared by UN-Women. The report demonstrated that women's economic empowerment and the realization of women's right to and rights at work are essential for the achievement of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It concluded that transforming the world of work for women requires the elimination of structural barriers and discriminatory laws and social norms in order to create equal economic opportunities and outcomes. Therefore, economic and social policies should target the elimination of inequalities and gaps related to women's labour force participation, entrepreneurship, pay and working conditions, social protection and unpaid care and domestic work. Education and skills training should be strengthened so as to enable women to respond to new opportunities in the changing world of work. Particular attention should be paid to the situation of women in the growing informal and migrant economies.

7. The agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the priority theme build on the recommendations set out in the report of the Secretary-General and provide a set of global standards that address the connection between women's economic empowerment and women's right to work and rights at work. They also make an important contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, providing critical impetus for women's economic empowerment, eliminating poverty, promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work, and equality within and among countries. The agreed conclusions recognize that women face structural barriers to their economic empowerment, and that women's disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work is a significant constraint on their economic opportunities. All forms of violence against women, including sexual harassment at work, are recognized as a major impediment to women's economic empowerment. In the agreed conclusions, Member States and other stakeholders are urged to take action to promote policies that support the reconciliation and sharing of work and family responsibilities between women and men, to eliminate occupational segregation by addressing structural barriers, gender stereotypes and negative social norms and to uphold the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value in the public and private sectors. They are urged to establish and strengthen inclusive and gender-responsive social protection systems, including floors, and to promote the transition from informal to formal work.

8. At its sixty-first session, the Commission also evaluated progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions adopted at the fifty-eighth session, on "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls", as its review theme (see E/2014/27, chap. I and E/CN.6/2017/4). The report of the Secretary-General, prepared by UN-Women, concluded that the implementation of the agreed conclusions has been uneven and recommended that actions to accelerate their implementation should take a comprehensive approach, particularly in the context of the 2030 Agenda. During an interactive dialogue, 11 Member States[1] presented information, on a voluntary basis, on lessons learned and challenges faced, and identified best practices and means for accelerated programme implementation through national and regional efforts. During

[1] Bulgaria, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Liberia, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Slovakia, Spain and the United Republic of Tanzania.

the presentations. Member States focused on those action areas of the agreed conclusions that were highly relevant to the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals. Member States emphasized that progress has been made in enacting legislation to address discrimination against women, in particular as regards combating violence against women and promoting access to justice and women's labour and economic rights, but challenges remained and more comprehensive action was needed to achieve substantive equality.

9. The Commission adopted a resolution at its sixty-first session on preventing and eliminating sexual harassment in the workplace, and recommended a resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council, on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women.

B. General Assembly

10. UN-Women continued to provide normative support to the General Assembly. For the seventy-second session of the Assembly, the Entity prepared the report of the Secretary-General on women in development (A/72/282), which stressed that achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the eradication of poverty will require concerted action to facilitate the transition of women working in informal employment to formal employment, expand social protection coverage, recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, and promote women's access to and control over assets, including land, property and financial services.

11. UN-Women prepared three additional reports of the Secretary-General, the first of which was the report on the improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas (A/72/207), which highlighted that most women and girls in rural areas, worldwide, fare worse than rural men and urban women and that the challenges rural women and girls face have been magnified by the pace and complexity of globalization, urbanization, migration and climate change, among other processes. The report on violence against women migrant workers (A/72/215) stressed that women migrant workers continue to face a heightened risk of abuse, extortion and sexual and gender-based violence. Persistent gaps remain in the collection and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data on the violence experienced by women migrant workers, which is often attributable to the high rate of migrant women in informal and unregulated sectors. The report on measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/72/203) concluded that progress in gender mainstreaming remains uneven and recommended that further measures be taken by intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system to fully mainstream a gender perspective into all items under their consideration and within their respective mandates.

12. UN-Women provided Member States with technical and substantive support during the negotiations on the resolutions on women in development and on the follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

13. The Entity continued to provide Member States with normative support to strengthen gender perspectives in other resolutions of the General Assembly. The Entity focused on resolutions of the Second and Third Committees that had little or no gender equality content in the past, on the basis of the analysis presented in the report on measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to and implementation

of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/72/203). The Entity increased its efforts to highlight opportunities for focusing greater attention on gender perspectives in the areas of disarmament and humanitarian affairs.

14. UN-Women organized a special event of the Second Committee, presenting a data and policy perspective on combating poverty and promoting gender equality. Experts discussed innovative policy solutions for reducing poverty and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, in order to inform the Second Committee's work. Together with the World Bank, UN-Women presented the initial results of a global study on the different experiences of women and men in the context of poverty. The study concluded that between the ages of 20 and 34, women are more likely to be poor than men, which coincides with the peak productive and reproductive ages of both men and women, and can be related to such factors as having young children in the household and the higher likelihood of women leaving the labour market in response to increasing demands on their time in terms of time allocated to unpaid care work. The study also found that households with children are among the poorest, and that single parent households with children, predominantly single mothers with children, face a far higher risk of poverty. The study further concluded that divorce, separation and widowhood affect women more negatively than men, with divorced women between the ages of 18 to 49 more than twice as likely to be poor as divorced men in that same age group. On the basis of the initial results of the global study, UN-Women and the World Bank recommended that poverty eradication strategies place greater attention on the needs of women during specific periods of their lives and provide accessible, affordable and quality childcare services for families with children, in particular single parent families, as well as social protection transfers for women with children.

15. During the high-level week of the seventy-second session, the General Assembly held a high-level meeting on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. UN-Women provided substantive support to Member States during the negotiations on the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (General Assembly resolution 72/1), which highlights the root causes of trafficking, including sexual violence and gender discrimination, as well as the need to develop gender-sensitive policies and strengthen women's and girls' roles as agents of change to combat trafficking. It commits Member States to promoting awareness-raising campaigns, improve the collection of data disaggregated by age and sex and strengthen collective action among stakeholders. UN-Women participated in the interactive panel discussion on the Global Plan of Action and effective partnerships for the prevention and prosecution of trafficking in persons, also taking into consideration the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Entity called on stakeholders to ensure that efforts to prevent trafficking in persons address the root causes of gender inequality, including negative social norms and stereotypes, as well as the continuing acceptance of violence against women and girls in societies.

16. Also during the high-level week, UN-Women organized and/or co-organized side events, which sought to bring awareness to policy measures and best practices to contribute to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Together with the International Labour Organization and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, UN-Women launched the Equal Pay International Coalition. By working with governments, employers and workers and their representative organizations, and other stakeholders, the multi-stakeholder initiative will contribute to the removal of barriers to women's economic empowerment and ensure women's free and equal participation in the global economy, as well as support research and data collection, advocacy, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building to make equal pay for work of equal value a reality and

reduce the gender pay gap. UN-Women also co-organized a high-level round-table dialogue with the Group of Champions for Women's Economic Empowerment, entitled "Leave no one behind: actions and commitments for women's economic empowerment". The dialogue brought together leaders from government, the United Nations system, the private sector, multilateral institutions and civil society organizations to demonstrate their commitment to women's economic empowerment, in line with the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in response to the call to action of the High-level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment.

17. The Spotlight Initiative of the European Union and the United Nations was launched during the high-level week. The initiative is a global fund to address violence against women and girls, with the European Union and the United Nations partnering to deploy targeted, large-scale investments, totalling €500 million, over the course of five years. UN-Women will play a central role in this initiative, alongside the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, under the leadership and coordination of the Deputy Secretary-General and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. UN-Women will lead the global technical team that will be established to provide technical guidance for country programming, ensure coherence throughout regions and guarantee the highest technical level of interventions.

C. Security Council

18. UN-Women continued to play a leading role in promoting and supporting the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. The work encompasses the follow-up to the commitments and recommendations resulting from the 2015 high-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), including those outlined in the global study on the implementation of Council resolution 1325 (2000)[2] and in Council resolution 2242 (2015). UN-Women also played an active role in supporting the implementation of gender-specific recommendations from the Council's reviews of peacekeeping operations (A/70/95-S/2015/446) and of the peacebuilding architecture (A/69/968-S/2015/490).

19. On 27 October 2017, the Security Council convened its annual open debate on women, peace and security. UN-Women, with the support of the Standing Committee on Women, Peace and Security, coordinated the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2017/861), which informed the open debate. The open debate registered one of the highest number of speakers of any Security Council meeting of the year. Six Member States participated at the ministerial level and delivered statements during the open debate, demonstrating the importance attached to the women, peace and security agenda.

20. In response to the mandate in Security Council resolution 2242 (2015), UN-Women continued to work to integrate its work on women, peace and security and counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism. UN-Women has expanded its portfolio of policy and programme activities aimed at preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism and currently has over 25 ongoing or planned country- and region-specific programmes in this area. Also in response to the mandate in Council resolution 2242 (2015), UN-Women supported the efforts of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to integrate a gender perspective as a cross-cutting issue throughout their activities. The

[2] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325* (New York, 2015).

Entity co-chairs the inter-agency working group on adopting a gender-sensitive approach to countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, which has prepared a joint project on the gender dimensions of returning foreign terrorist fighters, to begin in 2018.

21. The Entity continued to serve as the secretariat for the Security Council's Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security. In Security Council resolution 2242 (2015), the Group is tasked with facilitating a more systematic approach to the Council's work on women, peace and security so as to enable greater Council oversight and coordination of implementation efforts in this area. The Group, under its co-chairs for 2017 (Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay) convened meetings on Mali, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Central African Republic, Yemen and the Lake Chad Basin region. In support of the Group's work, UN-Women facilitated the participation of women from civil society in country-specific meetings of the Security Council, a new practice that was called for by the Council in its resolution 2242 (2015). In 2017, Council meetings on Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan included a briefing from women representing civil society. Also as part of its support to the Group, UN-Women provided extensive background on the topic of women, peace and security to Council members ahead of the Council's visits to African Union headquarters in Ethiopia, the Lake Chad Basin region, the Sahel and Colombia, which increased the visibility of women, peace and security issues during those visits.

22. The Entity continued its advocacy for increased financing for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. As a member of the Funding Board of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund,[1] UN-Women actively engaged in resource mobilization efforts for the Fund. The Entity also provided secretariat support to the Fund and promoted effective coordination among Funding Board members. Launched in February 2016, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund is a dedicated mechanism for support to women, peace and security efforts and aims to address funding gaps for women peacebuilders. The Fund has supported women's organizations in Burundi, Colombia, Jordan and Solomon Islands. However, despite notable results, resource constraints have limited eligible countries' access to the Fund, with 19 of the 23 countries eligible for support yet to receive funding.

23. The Women, Peace and Security National Focal Points Network, which was launched by 63 Member States in 2016, provides a mechanism for bridging policy and practice, coordinating action, the sharing of good practices and more effective targeting of gaps and challenges. The Network, supported by UN-Women, held its inaugural meeting in April 2017 in Spain. Over 100 national focal points, other government actors and civil society representatives from 61 countries discussed innovative uses of national action plans, such as addressing structural barriers to gender equality and preventing violent extremism, as well as civil society engagement in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of such plans.

24. In support of the women, peace and security agenda, the Entity also made its technical expertise on gender equality available to key actors of peace processes and mediation efforts and deployed experts on sexual and gender-based violence crimes to international investigations conducted by commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions. It also supported the development and implementation of national and regional action plans and strategies on women, peace and security.

[1] Formerly known as the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action.

D. Economic and Social Council

25. The Economic and Social Council, including its subsidiary bodies, plays a critical role in policy coherence and in the integrated and coordinated follow-up to and review of outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields. The Council has a leading role in overseeing the follow-up, review and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through the forum on financing for development follow-up and the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Council. UN-Women considers its engagement with and the provision of normative support to the Council, its processes and subsidiary bodies, as critically important in achieving sustained attention to the gender-responsive implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

26. As in previous years, UN-Women prepared the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2017/57 and Corr.1). The report presents progress made in accountability for gender mainstreaming among the entities of the United Nations system through the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the operational activities of the United Nations development system. In 2016, the proportion of ratings indicative of meeting or exceeding requirements of the System-wide Action Plan increased to 64 per cent, an increase of seven percentage points from 2015. For the fifth consecutive year however, United Nations system entities performed the weakest in the area of resource allocation, with only 22 per cent of entities meeting or exceeding requirements. The report highlighted the Entity's key role in coordinating United Nations system efforts towards the next version of the System-wide Action Plan, which contextualizes the Action Plan within the 2030 Agenda, to be rolled out in 2018. This included the administration of a survey, two inter-agency workshops and 20 in-person consultations. UN-Women also supported eight United Nations system entities in piloting the new version of the System-wide Action Plan. The Entity played a key role in updating the United Nations country team performance indicators on gender equality and the empowerment of women (the "scorecard") as well as the guidance for the new generation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, which include gender-specific interventions and integrated approaches to implementing strategic sustainable development outcomes.

27. The Entity provided technical support to Member States during the negotiations on Economic and Social Council resolution 2017/9 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. In the resolution, the Council urged the United Nations system to accelerate gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes, including in support of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It called upon the United Nations system to accelerate the full and effective mainstreaming of a gender perspective at the global, regional and country levels, including by launching and fully implementing, beginning in 2018, the updated System-wide Action Plan and the United Nations country team scorecard. The resolution included a request to the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system to ensure that recruitment strategies, promotion and retention policies, career development and policies regarding anti-harassment and sexual harassment, among others, accelerate the achievement of gender parity in the United Nations.

28. Also in 2017, UN-Women placed a high priority on participating in the Council's forum on financing for development follow-up. As a member of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, the Entity contributed to the

2017 report of the Task Force (E/FFDF/2017/2). The report stressed that measures to increase long-term investments and address short-term vulnerabilities need to be mutually reinforcing and investments in gender equality are essential to achieving sustained and inclusive economic growth and sustainable development.

29. During the negotiations on the negotiated outcome of the forum on financing for development follow-up (see E/FFDF/2017/3), the Entity provided substantive support to Member States through key messages based on research and analysis, as well as by utilizing the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixty-first session. In the negotiated outcome, Member States recognized that significant economic and social losses are the result of a lack of progress in achieving gender equality and that it is therefore critical that policies and actions seek to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Member States also underlined that globally, gross domestic product could increase significantly if every country achieved gender equality and increased the participation of women in the formal labour force, as well as in leadership and decision-making positions.

30. During the Council's humanitarian segment, UN-Women briefed Member States on the gender marker in humanitarian response as an important tool to track the proportion of funding dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian contexts. UN-Women also provided substantive support to Member States to further enhance a gender perspective in the resolution on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (Council resolution 2017/14). The Entity's technical inputs contributed to the strong condemnation by Member States of all acts of sexual and gender-based violence and the call for stronger responses, for example by cooperating with local women's organizations and seeking to ensure the provision of meaningful access to medical, legal and psychosocial and livelihood services, for all victims, survivors and those affected by such violence.

31. During its 2017 session under the auspices of the Council, the high-level political forum on sustainable development considered the theme of "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world" and undertook an in-depth review of the following Sustainable Development Goals: Goal 1, on ending poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2, on ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture; Goal 3, on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages; Goal 5, on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls; Goal 9, on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation; and Goal 14, on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Goal 17, on the means of implementation and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, is discussed annually.

32. UN-Women used the preparatory process to systematically provide Member States and other stakeholders with insights, good practices and data on the effective, gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, thus laying the groundwork for strengthened gender equality outcomes. The Entity also actively engaged Member States to outline opportunities for the integration of gender perspectives in voluntary national reviews to the high-level political forum, in line with the commitment to systematically mainstream a gender perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The efforts prompted a significant number of Member States to address gender perspectives in their voluntary reviews.

33. As a contribution to the forum's in-depth review of Goal 5, UN-Women co-led the preparation of a background note that reviewed the implementation of Goal 5,[4] along with the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and in collaboration with other United Nations entities. The note addressed the status of implementation of Goal 5 targets and the principal interlinkages between Goal 5 and other Sustainable Development Goals, as well as gaps, challenges and opportunities for accelerating the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The note concluded with recommendations to enhance national-level implementation, and stressed the importance of eliminating structural barriers to gender equality, strengthening accountability mechanisms for gender equality, increasing investment and financing for gender equality and increasing data collection capacity. The note also highlighted the importance of an active civil society, including in the context of local and national-level decision-making.

34. As an input to the in-depth review by the high-level political forum of Goal 5, UN-Women organized an expert group meeting on strategies for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls through the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The meeting brought together Member States, United Nations entities, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to discuss ways and means for the effective implementation of Goal 5, as well as for harnessing the synergies and addressing any trade-offs in the integrated and interlinked implementation of the Goals. The meeting's key recommendations on accelerating the eradication of poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world called for: linking the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with international commitments and human rights treaty obligations; addressing structural barriers to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda; mainstreaming a gender perspective in all actions to address systemic issues affecting implementation of the Goals, such as macroeconomic, trade and financial policies, climate change, conflict and militarization, and migration; ensuring the full integration of gender equality policies and strategies into national sustainable development frameworks; strengthening the participation of all stakeholders in the implementation of Goal 5, including women's organizations; enhancing the engagement and accountability of the private sector; mobilizing political will to prioritize existing resources towards policies and programmes that advance gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls; and strengthening the availability and use of gender statistics. The recommendations[5] strengthened the high-level political forum in its role of providing political leadership, guidance and recommendations for the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.

35. The note on the implementation of Goal 5 and the recommendations from the expert group meeting formed the basis of UN-Women substantive support to Member States during the negotiations on the ministerial declaration of the high-level political forum (E/HLS/2017/1). Building on these and other inputs, the ministerial declaration reiterates the urgency of addressing structural barriers to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, such as discriminatory laws and policies, gender stereotypes, harmful practices and negative social norms and attitudes and underscores that all other Goals need to be implemented in a manner that delivers results for women and girls. Critically, the declaration urges countries to fully integrate gender equality strategies into national sustainable development frameworks so as to promote greater policy coherence, recognizing that achieving

[4] Available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14383SDG5format-revOD.pdf.

[5] Available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/15791Recommendations_SDG_5.pdf.

gender equality will require both targeted action and the mainstreaming of gender into all efforts. This recommendation addresses the concern of some national gender equality mechanisms that national gender equality strategies and national development strategies are often on two parallel tracks.

36. On the occasion of the 2017 high-level political forum, UN-Women, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Statistics Division, hosted a round-table discussion with the Chairs of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Statistical Commission and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. The discussion provided a key opportunity for functional commissions to present their ongoing efforts at integrating a gender perspective in their work and their contribution to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as to expand ongoing collaboration, interaction and information exchange on issues of common interest.

37. UN-Women continued its engagement with functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council throughout the year. The Entity contributed to the work of the Statistical Commission, as well as of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, in the development of gender statistics. In particular, UN-Women supported the development of internationally accepted standards and methodologies for use by governments to monitor the implementation of targets for which such standards do not yet exist. As a result of the Entity's substantive support, internationally accepted methodologies were recently developed and agreed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group for three indicators under Goal 5: 5.5.1, proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments; 5.a.2, proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control; and 5.c.1, proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment.

38. Building on work initiated in 2016, the Entity further expanded its contribution pertaining to women and drug policy, participating in an intersessional meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs that focused on the implementation of the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem (Assembly resolution S-30/1). During its participation in the expert panel relating to drugs and human rights, youth, children, women and communities, UN-Women highlighted four specific areas of action and intervention that require more attention in order to address the needs and challenges of women in the context of the world drug problem, namely: discrimination against women and girls, women's full participation and leadership in decision-making, mainstreaming a gender perspective into drugs-related policies and programmes, and strengthening capacity for gender statistics.

39. UN-Women also provided substantive expertise to Member States during the negotiations of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on its resolution 26/3 (see E/2017/30-E/CN.15/2017/13) on mainstreaming a gender perspective into crime prevention and criminal justice policies and programmes and into efforts to prevent and combat transnational organized crime. The resolution calls on Member States to mainstream a gender perspective into criminal justice systems, including through legislation, policies and programmes, as well as by promoting gender-specific measures in crime prevention and protection policies.

40. UN-Women continued to provide technical expertise to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, through its participation in the Commission's panel discussion on new innovation approaches to support the

implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Placing emphasis on gender perspectives, the Entity highlighted ways to manage technological and digital change for women's economic empowerment, including through women's and girls' participation as users, content creators, employees, entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

III. Advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women through thematic international and other normative processes

41. The following section summarizes the normative support, engagement and advocacy efforts of UN-Women in relation to a range of intergovernmental processes.

A. Human rights

42. UN-Women continued to provide normative support to the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council, including by supporting Member States at the national level in preparing for the review, assisting with the preparation of reports by stakeholders, contributing to United Nations country team reports, making interventions at meetings of the Human Rights Council and supporting the implementation of recommendations at the country level.

43. UN-Women further expanded its collaboration with other mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, such as the special procedures. In collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, UN-Women co-organized a side event at the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, with the Permanent Mission of Chile, on the elimination of femicide and gender-related killings of women. The Special Rapporteur also participated in the launch of the UN-Women/European Union initiative to end violence against women and girls in the Western Balkans and Turkey. This three-year programme aims at ending discrimination and violence against women through addressing negative social norms and stereotypes and strengthening the capacity of women's organizations to advocate for the effective implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes to prevent and respond to violence against women, as well as supporting governments in the provision of comprehensive, multisectoral services for survivors of violence. UN-Women also continued to ensure that all Council-mandated commissions of inquiry and, increasingly, all fact-finding and expert missions have the required gender expertise to fulfil their mandates. In 2017, this included providing sexual and gender-based crime investigators or gender advisers for the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, the team of international experts on the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic; the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan; and the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen.

44. In coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, UN-Women supported the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Support was provided to States parties for reporting under the Convention, preparing for the constructive dialogue with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and in connection with the preparation of shadow reports by civil society organizations and reports by United Nations country teams submitted to the Committee.

45. Support provided by UN-Women to the Committee included work on general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, which elaborates on the gender-based nature of this form of violence, and builds on the work of the Committee and other international human rights mechanisms as well as developments at the national, regional and international levels. UN-Women, in partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, designed a practitioner's toolkit on women's access to justice in support of the implementation of general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice. The toolkit is due to be launched at the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in March 2018. Through its operational work, UN-Women continued to support the implementation of and follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations, including their reflection in national laws, policies and programmes.

46. UN-Women continued to highlight the situation of women and girls with disabilities in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Entity co-sponsored and participated in events during the tenth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and supported the participation of women with disabilities at the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

B. Climate change

47. In 2017, UN-Women provided technical and substantive support to parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, leading to the adoption of the first gender action plan at the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, in November 2017. The adoption of the gender action plan constitutes the culmination of the Entity's systematic contribution and support in this area over the past five years.

48. At the request of parties, UN-Women supported the organization of an informal consultation to initiate discussions on possible elements of the gender action plan, including proposals for priority areas and activities. The report on the consultation became the basis for discussion during the in-session workshop on the gender action plan at the forty-sixth session of the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Implementation, held in May 2017. UN-Women subsequently prepared an elements paper, containing priority areas, activities, timelines and deliverables, which the Entity presented at an informal meeting of parties at the beginning of the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties.

49. The gender action plan advances women's full, equal and meaningful participation, promotes gender-responsive climate policy and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Convention and the work of parties and all stakeholders at all levels. The action plan includes five priority areas on capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and communication; gender balance, participation and women's leadership; coherence; gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation; and monitoring and reporting.

50. During the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties, UN-Women organized a high-level event on promoting gender-responsive and human rights-based approaches to maximize development co-benefits of climate action. The event engaged key representative constituencies to articulate their views on how commitments on gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights should be addressed in the implementation of the Convention and the Paris Agreement, in

particular in parties' nationally determined contributions, the global stocktake and the facilitative dialogue.

C. Desertification

51. In response to the growing interest of parties in promoting the gender-responsive implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, UN-Women stepped up its work in this area. Particular emphasis was placed on women's contribution and leadership and on the importance of monitoring, reporting and the generation of evidence on the mutually reinforcing benefits of gender equality and efforts to combat land degradation and desertification.

52. The Entity organized a two-day workshop on the occasion of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to build the capacity of parties and other stakeholders on gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the Convention, including on land degradation neutrality. The workshop provided information on concepts, mandates and methodologies for integrating a gender perspective in the implementation of the Convention and subsequent decisions of parties, as well as in the planning and implementation of land degradation, desertification, drought and land degradation-neutral interventions at the national level. In cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and the Convention secretariat, UN-Women also co-organized a "Gender Day" during the Conference of the Parties, with a focus on gender mainstreaming in the development of transformative land degradation-neutral projects.

53. UN-Women efforts contributed to the adoption by the parties of a decision on gender equality and women's empowerment for the enhanced and effective implementation of the Convention, in which the Conference of the Parties endorsed the gender action plan to support the gender-responsive implementation of the Convention's 2018–2030 strategic framework. The gender action plan includes thematic areas on women's participation in decision-making during the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of initiatives to implement the Convention; integrating women's economic empowerment in implementation activities in order to eradicate their extreme poverty; strengthening women's land rights and access to resources, including by fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal targets; and enhancing women's access to improved knowledge and technologies that relate to effective implementation of the Convention. The decision also requested the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, which supports countries in translating the Convention into action and achieving land degradation neutrality at the national level, to partner with the Rio Conventions, UN-Women and other relevant United Nations entities, international organizations and development partners to support parties in piloting the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action.

D. Refugees and migrants

54. Following the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants by the General Assembly in September 2016 (Assembly resolution 71/1), UN-Women strategically expanded its contributions to the work towards the global compacts called for in that resolution. To inform the process of developing the global compact on refugees, UN-Women developed a position paper and aide-memoire[6] providing concrete recommendations on how commitments on gender equality and the

[6] Available at www.unhcr.org/en-us/events/conferences/59ddfcc97/aide-memoire-gender-equality-empowerment-women-global-compact-refugees.html.

empowerment of women and girls can be operationalized across the four thematic sections of the comprehensive refugee response framework's plan of action, and addressing gender issues in cross-cutting areas, such as resources, capacity, evidence and data, participation and leadership, and accountability. UN-Women, in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, co-hosted an event in October 2017 to disseminate these key messages and brief Member States on the imperative of the global compact adequately reflecting the New York Declaration's specific commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment and ways to translate those commitments into action.

55. UN-Women continued to contribute to the consultations on the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. With the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN-Women in 2016 organized an expert meeting on addressing women's human rights in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, in which representatives of human rights treaty bodies, United Nations entities, civil society organizations and academia participated. This was followed by a UN-Women multi-stakeholder meeting on strategies to address women's human rights in the global compact on migration, in January 2017. A set of recommendations resulted from both meetings that highlighted specific areas to be strengthened in order to ensure that the rights of migrant women and girls are promoted and protected at all stages of migration, while recognizing women's agency throughout the migration process.[7] UN-Women also contributed a set of key messages to the preparatory meeting held in Mexico, in December 2017.

56. The Entity provided technical support to the Global Migration Group to ensure that gender perspectives were mainstreamed throughout all outputs, including the six issue briefs prepared by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration for the thematic sessions during the preparatory phases for the global compact. UN-Women, together with the International Labour Organization, co-led the drafting of the issue brief for the thematic session on irregular migration and regular pathways.

IV. Support for the implementation of policy guidance

57. As countries accelerated the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN-Women expanded its role in supporting a strengthened gender-responsive approach to those efforts. The Entity's operational work was strongly informed by the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission at its sixtieth session on women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development. They are also reflected in the Entity's strategic plan, 2018–2021, which reinforces the linkages between implementation of the Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

58. UN-Women worked extensively with national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as other line ministries, in the formulation and implementation of national gender action plans. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, UN-Women provided technical and substantive support to the national gender mechanism in drafting the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2015–2017, including resource and budgeting maps. Following the adoption of the National Action Plan, the Entity provided support in 2017 to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development and the Ministry of Emergency Situations, in the development of sectoral gender action plans.

[7] Available at www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/3/addressing-womens-rights-in-global-compact-for-migration.

59. In Bangladesh, UN-Women organized a national consultation on the agreed conclusions adopted by the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women to identify ways to strengthen government action plans for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The national consultations, which included the participation of over 50 representatives from Government, development partners, the United Nations system and civil society organizations, used the agreed conclusions as a tool to analyse the gaps in achieving gender equality targets and to identify strategies to implement localized action plans for the Sustainable Development Goals in Bangladesh. Following the national consultation, UN-Women supported the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in preparing an analysis that linked the existing implementation plans for the Goals of line ministries with the agreed conclusions. The analysis was then disseminated to line ministries and civil society organizations to promote focused attention to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

60. In support of the data capacities of governments, in the United Republic of Tanzania, for example, UN-Women supported the government in localizing the Sustainable Development Goals through the analysis and development of gender-responsive indicator frameworks that enable tracking of national commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women across different national and international frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the African Union Agenda 2063 and the national five-year development plan. The exercise identified key entry points for the integrated tracking of gender-sensitive indicators and targets. In close collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics, UN-Women also provided capacity development to key government institutions in indicator tracking and data collection with a focus on Goal 5 and gender-specific targets of the Goals.

61. UN-Women supported governments in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the implementation of their national sustainable development strategies. In the Dominican Republic, for example, UN-Women prepared reports on gender mainstreaming in public policies as well as methodological frameworks for how individual government institutions could mainstream a gender perspective in their plans, projects and programmes. As a result of this work, four line ministries, including the ministries of finance; economy, planning and development; women; and public administration, as well as eight national institutions, signed an inter-institutional coordination agreement that has the principal objective of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the implementation of the national development strategy 2030. In the agreement, UN-Women is assigned a key role in supporting the inter-institutional commission in its role of ensuring results are achieved.

V. Conclusions

62. In 2017, UN-Women placed a high priority on providing normative support to intergovernmental processes and bodies. In this context, the Entity worked with Security Council members in facilitating a more systematic approach to their work on women, peace and security, in response to resolution 2242 (2015). UN-Women continued to expand its collaboration with mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, such as its special procedures. The Entity built on its previous effective engagement in support of the development of global compacts on refugees and for safe, orderly and regular migration.

63. The normative aspects of UN-Women work were pivotal in strengthening gender-responsive actions to address climate change and desertification, with the new

gender action plans adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification constituting major achievements towards gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the respective conventions. Going forward, UN-Women will continue its critical engagement in this area to support parties in mainstreaming a gender perspective in all aspects of their work.

64. Throughout the year, the Entity's normative support to accelerate the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda remained at the forefront of its efforts. With UN-Women normative support, advocacy and engagement, Member States made important normative gains in strengthening global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission at its sixty-first session on women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work make an important contribution to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The commitment of Member States in the ministerial declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development should result in greater policy coherence between efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and sustainable development. The increased attention given to gender perspectives by several functional commissions further amplify this potential.

65. As the Commission on the Status of Women is expected to make a recommendation, at its sixty-second session, on how best to utilize the year 2020 to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women, going forward, UN-Women will comprehensively leverage its mandate as a composite entity to support Member States and other stakeholders in achieving concrete results for women and girls everywhere.